

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe yourself?

Be ready to spend about two minutes answering this question. Begin wherever you feel comfortable: high school, college, or a prior position. This is your opportunity to speak logically and clearly about yourself. Share the accomplishments and attributes that make you a valuable employee. Practice describing yourself and 'selling' your best details in two minutes or less.

2. Tell me about your biggest accomplishment.

Your response here is critical. Focus on your hard work, commitment to long hours, or ability to work under pressure. Describe a recent challenge and how you were involved in the solution by working overtime, taking a leadership role, or other contribution. Describe one of your accomplishments that applies to this new position.

3. Why do you want to change jobs?

It is acceptable to discuss major problems within the company, or to share that the company is being bought out or shut down. Never criticize a past employer or co-workers. A safe answer is that you feel you can no longer make a contribution because of extensive changes at the company.

4. What did you like/dislike about your last position?

Your answer gives the interviewer an idea of whether you are a good fit for this position. Avoid admitting you didn't like working overtime or you had a conflict with the company's management team. Instead, give a positive answer by saying you enjoy challenges and growth opportunities.

5. How are you qualified for this position?

Focus on a few requirements of the job and how you can meet those requirements through your particular skills and experience. Highlight your management experience, technical skills, or a personal success story.

6. Describe your most important strengths.

Identify five of your strengths that are most relative to the position for which you're interviewing (i.e., technical skills, management experience). Describe each strength using a brief example of how you successfully applied that particular strength to a work situation.

7. Have you accomplished something you didn't think was possible?

This question allows you to prove your integrity, work ethic, or commitment to achieving a goal. Be prepared to give an example of how you accomplished a significant challenge without giving up.

8. Is there a situation in the past in which you took the initiative?

A motivated, results-oriented employee knows what to do without being told. Describe to the interviewer situations in which you exhibited a strong work ethic or creative abilities that helped you overcome a challenging situation.

9. Can you think of a situation during your career that was embarrassing? How would you handle the same situation today?

Your answer shows your ability to learn from past mistakes. Be honest about a particular failure, but talk positively about the lesson you learned from it.

10. One of our company's biggest challenges is...How would you deal with this?

Ask for more details before answering this question. It's helpful to break down the challenge into sub-challenges, in which you may have prior experience. Explain how you would handle these situations, and summarize with how you would solve the overall problem. This is a great opportunity to present your analytical and organizational skills.

11. Have you ever been in situations involving difficult co-workers, tight deadlines, or inadequate resources? How did you handle these situations?

This is where you can discuss effective management skills and your ability to handle various challenges. Describe your most difficult management task and the skills you used to deal with it, such as organizational and interpersonal skills, perseverance, and diplomacy.

12. What would you change about your career if given the opportunity?

Be honest. The interviewer wants to know whether you'll be happy in the position, and whether you have the motivation to make changes to get what you want out of your career.

13. What are your career goals?

Don't mention goals you know are most likely not attainable. Give realistic answers, such as a management promotion in three-to-five years. Consider your past (did you rise quickly or travel a rocky road?), and use this as a guideline for what seems reasonable.

14. Most importantly, why should we hire you?

Take this opportunity to present your skills, positive attitude, and confidence. Restate some of the key aspects of the job (which you've gleaned from the interview), and describe traits that make you an ideal candidate for the position.